In the Name of Allaah the Most Gracious The Most Merciful

Al-Siyaam

70 Matters Related to Fasting

Book by Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid

Contents

Introduction

Praise be to Allaah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evil of our own selves and from our evil deeds. Whomsoever Allaah guides cannot be misled, and whomsoever He leaves astray cannot be guided. I bear witness that there is no god except Allaah alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

Allaah has blessed His slaves with certain seasons of goodness, in which *hasanaat* (rewards for good deeds) are multiplied, *sayi'aat* (bad deeds) are forgiven, people's status is raised, the hearts of the believers turn to their Master, those who purify themselves attain success and those who corrupt themselves fail. Allaah has created His slaves to worship Him, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): *"And I (Allaah) created not the jinns and humans except that they should worship Me (Alone)." [al-Dhaariyaat 51:56]*

One of the greatest acts of worship is fasting, which Allaah has made obligatory on His slaves, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

"… Observing al-sawm (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-muttaqoon (the pious)." [al-Baqarah 2:183]

Allaah encourages His slaves to fast:

"… And that you fast, it is better for you, if only you know." [al-Baqarah 2:184 – interpretation of the meaning]

He guides them to give thanks to Him for having made fasting obligatory on them:

"… that you should magnify Allaah for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him." [al-Baqarah 2:185 – interpretation of the meaning]

He has made fasting dear to them, and has made it easy so that people do not find it too hard to give up their habits and what they are used to. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"… for a fixed number of days…" [al-Baqarah 2:184]

He has mercy on them and keeps them away from difficulties and harm, as He says (interpretation of the meaning:

"… but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days…" [al-Baqarah 2:184]

No wonder then, that in this month the hearts of the believers turn to their Most Merciful Lord, fearing their Lord above them, and hoping to attain His reward and the great victory (Paradise).

As the status of this act of worship is so high, it is essential to learn the ahkaam (rulings) that have to do with the month of fasting so that the Muslim will know what is obligatory, in order to do it, what is haraam, in order to avoid it, and what is permissible, so that he need not subject himself to hardship by depriving himself of it.

This book is a summary of the rulings, etiquette and Sunnah of fasting. May Allaah make it of benefit to myself and my Muslim brothers. Praise be to Allaah, Lord of the Worlds.

[Table of Contents]

Definition of Siyaam (fasting)

(1) Siyaam in Arabic means abstaining; in Islam it means abstaining from things that break the fast, from dawn until sunset, having first made the intention (*niyyah*) to fast.

Ruling on fasting

(2) The ummah is agreed that fasting the month of Ramadaan is obligatory, the evidence for which is in the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Observing al-sawn (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-muttaqoon (the pious)." [al-Baqarah 2:183]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Islam is built on five [pillars]…" among which he mentioned fasting in Ramadaan. (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, 1/49). Whoever breaks the fast during Ramadaan without a legitimate excuse has committed a serious major sin, The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, describing a dream that he had seen: "… until I was at the mountain, where I heard loud voices. I asked, 'What are these voices?' They said, 'This is the howling of the people of Hellfire.' Then I was taken [to another place], and I saw people hanging from their hamstrings, with the corners of their mouths torn and dripping with blood. I said, 'Who are these?' They said, 'The people who broke their fast before it was the proper time to do so,' i.e., before the time of iftaar." (*Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/420).

Al-Haafiz al-Dhahabi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, "Among the believers it is well-established that whoever does not fast in Ramadaan without a valid excuse is worse than an adulterer or drunkard; they doubt whether he is even a Muslim at all, and they regard him as a heretic and profligate." Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah] (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "If a person does not fast in Ramadaan knowing that it is haraam but making it halaal for himself to do so, kill him; and if he does it because he is immoral [but believes it is haraam], then punish him for not fasting." (*Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/265).

[Table of Contents]

The virtues of fasting

(3) The virtues of fasting are great indeed, and one of the things reported in the saheeh ahaadeeth is that Allaah has chosen fasting for Himself, and He will reward it and multiply the reward without measure, as He says [in the hadeeth qudsi]: "Except for fasting which is only for My sake, and I will reward him for it." (al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 1904; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/407). Fasting has no equal (al-Nisaa'i, 4/165; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/413), and the du'aa' of the fasting person will not be refused (reported by al-Bayhaqi, 3/345; *al-Silsilat al-Saheeh*, 1797). The fasting person has two moments of joy: one when he breaks his fast and one when he meets his Lord and rejoices over his fasting (reported by Muslim, 2/807). Fasting will intercede for a person on the Day of Judgement, and will say, "O Lord, I prevented him from his food and physical desires during the day, so let me intercede for him." (Reported by Ahmad, 2/174. Al-Haythami classed its isnaad as hasan in *al-Majma'*, 3/181. See also *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/411). The smell that comes from the mouth of a fasting person is better with Allaah than the scent of musk. (Muslim, 2/807). Fasting is a protection and a strong fortress that keeps a person safe from the Fire. (Reported by Ahmad, 2/402; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/411; *Saheeh al-Jaami'*, 3880). Whoever fasts one day for the sake of Allaah, Allaah will remove his face seventy years' distance from the Fire. (Reported by Muslim, 2/808). Whoever fasts one day seeking the pleasure of Allaah, if that is the last day of his life, he will enter Paradise. (Reported by Ahmad, 5/391; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/412). In Paradise there is a gate called al-Rayyaan, through those who fast will enter, and no one will enter it except them; when they have entered it will be locked, and no-one else will enter through it." (al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, no. 1797).

Ramadaan is a pillar of Islam; the Qur'aan was revealed in this month, and in it there is a night that is better than a thousand months. "When Ramadaan begins,

the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-*Fath*, no. 3277). Fasting Ramadaan is equivalent to fasting ten months (See *Musnad Ahmad,* 5/280; *Saheeh al-Targheeb,* 1/421). "Whoever fasts Ramadaan out of faith and with the hope of reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath,* no. 37). At the breaking of every fast, Allaah will choose people to free from Hellfire. (Reported by Ahmad, 5/256; *Saheeh al-Targheeb,* 1/419).

[Table of Contents]

The benefits of fasting

(4) There is much wisdom and many benefits in fasting, which have to do with the taqwa mentioned by Allaah in the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

"… that you may become al-muttaqoon (the pious)." [al-Baqarah 2:183]

The interpretation of this is that if a person refrains from halaal things hoping to earn the pleasure of Allaah and out of fear of His punishment, it will be easier for him to refrain from doing haraam things.

If a person's stomach is hungry, this will keep many of his other faculties from feeling hunger or desires; but if his stomach is satisfied, his tongue, eye, hand and private parts will start to feel hungry. Fasting leads to the defeat of Shaytaan; it controls desires and protects one's faculties.

When the fasting person feels the pangs of hunger, he experiences how the poor feel, so he has compassion towards them and gives them something to ward off their hunger. Hearing about them is not the same as sharing their suffering, just as a rider does not understand the hardship of walking unless he gets down and walks.

Fasting trains the will to avoid desires and keep away from sin; it helps a person to overcome his own nature and to wean himself away from his habits. It also trains a person to get used to being organized and punctual, which will solve the problem that many people have of being disorganized, if only they realized.

Fasting is also a demonstration of the unity of the Muslims, as the ummah fasts and breaks its fast at the same time.

Fasting also provides a great opportunity for those who are calling others to Allaah. In this month many people come to the mosque who are coming for the first time, or who have not been to the mosque for a long time, and their hearts are open, so we must make the most of this opportunity by preaching in a gentle manner, teaching appropriate lessons and speaking beneficial words, whilst co-operating in righteousness and good deeds. The dai'yah should not be so preoccupied with others that he forgets his own soul and becomes like a wick that lights the way for others while it is itself consumed.

[Table of Contents]

Etiquette and Sunnah of fasting

Some aspects are obligatory (waajib) and others are recommended (mustahabb).

We should make sure that we eat and drink something at suhoor, and that we delay it until just before the adhaan of Fajr. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Have suhoor, for in suhoor there is blessing (barakah)." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath,* 4/139). "Suhoor is blessed food, and it involves being different from the people of the Book. What a good suhoor for the believer is dates." (Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 2345; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/448).

Not delaying iftaar, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The people will be fine so long as they do not delay iftaar." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, 4/198).

Breaking one's fast in the manner described in the hadeeth narrated by Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him): "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to break his fast with fresh dates before praying; if fresh dates were not available, he would eat (dried) dates; if dried dates were not available, he would have a few sips of water." (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3/79 and others. He said it is a ghareeb hasan hadeeth. Classed as saheeh in *al-Irwa'*, no. 922).

After iftaar, reciting the words reported in the hadeeth narrated by Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them both), according to which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), when he broke his fast, would say: "*Dhahaba al-zama', wa'btallat al-'urooq, wa thabat al-ajru in sha Allaah* (Thirst is gone, veins are flowing again, and the reward is certain, in sha

Allaah)." (Reported by Abu Dawood, 2/765; its isnaad was classed as hasan by al-Daaraqutni, 2/185).

Keeping away from sin, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When any of you is fasting, let him not commit sin…" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 1904). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever does not stop speaking falsehood and acting in accordance with it, Allaah has no need of him giving up his food and drink." (Al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 1903). The person who is fasting should avoid all kinds of haraam actions, such as backbiting, obscenity and lies, otherwise his reward may all be lost. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "It may be that a fasting person gets nothing from his fast except hunger." (Reported by Ibn Maajah, 1/539; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/453).

Among the things that can destroy one's hasanaat (good deeds) and bring sayi'aat (bad deeds) is allowing oneself to be distracted by quiz-shows, soap operas, movies and sports matches, idle gatherings, hanging about in the streets with evil people and time-wasters, driving around for no purpose, and crowding the streets and sidewalks, so that the months of tahajjud, dhikr and worship, for many people, becomes the month of sleeping in the day so as to avoid feeling hungry, thus missing their prayers and the opportunity to pray them in congregation, then spending their nights in entertainment and indulging their desires. Some people even greet the month with feelings of annoyance, thinking only of the pleasures they will miss out on. In Ramadaan, some people travel to kaafir lands to enjoy a holiday! Even the mosques are not free from such evils as the appearance of women wearing makeup and perfume, and even the Sacred House of Allaah is not free of these ills. Some people make the month a season for begging, even though they are not in need. Some of them entertain themselves with dangerous fireworks and the like, and some of them waste their time in the markets, wandering around the shops, or sewing and following fashions. Some of them put new products and new styles in their stores during the last ten days of the month, to keep people away from earning rewards and hasanaat.

Not allowing oneself to be provoked, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "If someone fights him or insults him, he should say, 'I am fasting, I am fasting.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari and others. *Al-Fath*, no. 1894) One reason for this is to remind himself, and another reason is to remind his adversary. But anyone who looks at the conduct of many of those who fast will see something quite different. It is essential to exercise self-control and be calm, but we see the opposite among crazy drivers who speed up when they hear the adhaan for Maghrib.

(*) Not eating too much, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The son of Adam fills no worse vessel than his stomach." (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 2380; he said, this is a hasan saheeh hadeeth). The wise person wants to eat to live, not live to eat. The best type of food is that which is there to be used, not that which is there to be served. But people indulge in making all kinds of food (during Ramadaan) and treating food preparation as a virtual art form, so that housewives and servants spend all their time on making food, and this keeps them away from worship, and people spend far more on food during Ramadaan than they do ordinarily. Thus the month becomes the month of indigestion, fatness and gastric illness, where people eat like gluttons and drink like thirsty camels, and when they get up to pray Taraaweeh, they do so reluctantly, and some of them leave after the first two rak'ahs.

(*) Being generous by sharing knowledge, giving money, using one's position of authority or physical strength to help others, and having a good attitude. Al-Bukhaari and Muslim reported that Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was the most generous of people [in doing good], and he was most generous of all in Ramadaan when Jibreel met with him, and he used to meet him every night in Ramadaan and teach him the Qur'aan. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was more generous in doing good than a blowing wind." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 6). How can people exchange generosity for stinginess and action for laziness, to the extent that they do not do their work properly and do not treat one another properly, and they use fasting as an excuse for all this.

Combining fasting with feeding the poor is one of the means of reaching Paradise, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "In Paradise there are rooms whose outside can be seen from the inside and the inside can be seen from the outside. Allaah has prepared them for those who feed the poor, who are gentle in speech, who fast regularly and who pray at night when people are asleep." (Reported by Ahmad 5/343; Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 2137. Al-Albaani said in his footnote, its isnaad is hasan because of other corroborating reports). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever gives food to a fasting person with which to break his fast, will have a reward equal to his, without it detracting in the slightest from the reward of the fasting person." (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3/171; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/451). Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah] (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "What is meant is that he should feed him until he is satisfied." (*Al-Ikhtiyaaraat al-Fiqhiyyah*, p. 109).

A number of the Salaf (may Allaah have mercy on them) preferred the poor over themselves when feeding them at the time of iftaar. Among these were ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar, Maalik ibn Deenaar, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others. ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar would not break his fast unless there were orphans and poor people with him.

[Table of Contents]

What should be done during this great month

(*) Preparing oneself and one’s environment for worship, hastening to repent and turn back to Allaah, rejoicing at the onset of the month, fasting properly, having the right frame of mind and fearing Allaah when praying Taraaweeh, not feeling tired during the middle ten days of the month, seeking Laylat al-Qadr, reading the entire Qur’aan time after time, trying to weep and trying to understand what you are reading. ‘Umrah during Ramadaan is equivalent to Hajj, and charity given during this virtuous time is multiplied, and I’tikaaf (retreat in the mosque for worship) is confirmed (as part of the Sunnah).

(*) There is nothing wrong with congratulating one another at the beginning of the month. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to tell his Companions the good news of the onset of Ramadaan, and urge them to make the most of it. Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, ‘There has come to you Ramadaan, a blessed month. Allaah has made it obligatory on you to fast (this month). During it the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are locked, and the devils are chained up. In it there is a night that is better than a thousand months, and whoever is deprived of its goodness is deprived indeed.’” (Reported by al-Nisaa'i, 4/129; *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/490)

[Table of Contents]

Some of the ahkaam (rulings) on fasting

(6) There is the kind of fasting that must be done on consecutive days, like fasting in Ramadaan, or fasting to expiate for killing someone by mistake, divorcing one’s wife by zihaar [a jaahili form of divorce in which a man says to his

wife, “You are to me as the back of my mother” – Translator], or having intercourse during the day in Ramadaan. Also, one who makes a vow to fast consecutive days must fulfil it.

There is also the other kind of fasting which does not have to be done on consecutive days, such as making up days missed in Ramadaan, fasting ten days if one does not have a sacrifice, fasting for kafaarat yameen (according to the majority), fasting to compensate for violating the conditions of ihraam (according to the most correct opinion), and fasting in fulfilment of a vow in cases where one did not have the intention of fasting consecutive days.

(7) Voluntary fasts make up for any shortfall in obligatory fasts. Examples of voluntary fasts include ‘Aashooraa, ‘Arafaah, Ayyaam al-Beed [the 13th, 14th and 15th of the hijri months – Translator], Mondays and Thursdays, six days of Shawwaal, and fasting more during Muharram and Sha’baan.

(8) It is not permitted to single out a Friday for fasting (al-Bukhaari, *Fath al-Baari*, no. 1985), or to fast on a Saturday, unless it is an obligatory fast (reported and classed as hasan by al-Tirmidhi, 3/111) – what is meant is singling it out without a reason. It is not permitted to fast for an entire lifetime, or to fast for two days or more without a break, i.e., to fast two or three days without a break in between.

It is haraam to fast on the two Eid days, or on the Ayyaam al-Tashreeq, which are the 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhoo’l-Hijjah, because these are the days of eating and drinking and remembering Allaah, but it is permissible for the one who does not have a sacrifice to fast them (Ayyaam al-Tashreeq) in Mina.

[Table of Contents]

How the onset of Ramadaan is determined

(9) The onset of Ramadaan is confirmed by the sighting of the new moon, or by the completion of thirty days of Sha’baan. Whoever sees the crescent of the new moon or hears about it from a trustworthy source is obliged to fast.

Using calculations to determine the onset of Ramadaan is bid’ah, because the hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) clearly states: “Fast when you see it (the new moon) and break your fast when you see it.” If an adult, sane, trustworthy, reliable Muslim who has good eyesight says

that he has seen the crescent with his own eyes, then we should take his word for it and act accordingly (i.e., start fasting).

[Table of Contents]

Who is obliged to fast?

(10) Fasting is an obligation on every adult, sane, settled [i.e., not travelling] Muslim who is able to fast and has nothing such as hayd [menstruation] or nifaas [post-natal bleeding] to prevent him or her from doing so.

A person is deemed to have reached adulthood when any one of the following three things occur: emission of semen, whether in a wet dream or otherwise; growth of coarse pubic hair around the private parts; attainment of fifteen years of age. In the case of females, there is a fourth, namely menstruation; when a girl reaches menarche (starts her periods), she is obliged to fast even if she has not yet reached the age of ten.

(11) Children should be instructed to fast at the age of seven, if they are able to, and some scholars said that a child may be smacked at the age of ten if he does not fast, just as in the case of salaah. (See *al-Mughni*, 3/90). The child will be rewarded for fasting, and the parents will be rewarded for bringing him up properly and guiding him to do good. Al-Rubay' bint Mu'awwidh (may Allaah be pleased with her) said, speaking about Ramadaan when it was made obligatory: "We used to make our children fast, and we would make them a toy made out of wool. If any one of them started to cry for food, we would give them that toy to play with until it was time to break the fast." (al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, no. 1960). Some people do not think it is important to tell their children to fast; indeed, a child may be enthusiastic about fasting and may be capable of doing it, but his father or mother may tell him not to fast, out of so-called "pity" for him. They do not realize that true pity and compassion consist of making him get used to fasting. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *"O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allaah, but do that which they are commanded." [al-Tahreem 66:6]*. Extra attention must be paid to the matter of a girl's fasting when she has just reached maturity, because she may fast when she has her period, out of shyness, and then not make up the fast later.

(12) If a kaafir becomes Muslim, or a child reaches puberty, or an insane person comes to his senses during the day, they should refrain from eating for the rest of the day, because they are now among those who are obliged to fast, but they do not have to make up for the days of Ramadaan that they have missed, because at that time they were not among those who are obliged to fast.

(13) The insane are not responsible for their deeds (their deeds are not being recorded), but if a person is insane at times and sane at other times, he must fast during his periods of sanity, and is excused during his periods of insanity. If he becomes insane during the day, this does not invalidate his fast, just as is the case if someone becomes unconscious because of illness or some other reason, because he had the intention of fasting when he was sane. (*Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan* by Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p.28). A similar case is the ruling governing epileptics.

(14) If someone dies during Ramadaan, there is no "debt" on him or his heirs with regard to the remaining days of the month.

(15) If someone does not know that it is fard (obligatory) to fast Ramadaan, or that it is haraam to eat or have sexual intercourse during the day in this month, then according to the majority of scholars, this excuse is acceptable, as is also the case for a new convert to Islam, a Muslim living in Daar al-Harb (non-Muslim lands) and a Muslim who grew up among the kuffaar. But a person who grew up among the Muslims and was able to ask questions and find out, has no excuse.

[Table of Contents]

Travellers

(16) For a traveller to be allowed to break his fast, certain conditions must be met. His journey should be lengthy, or else be known as travelling (although there is a well-known difference of opinion among the scholars on this matter), and should go beyond the city and its suburbs. (The majority of scholars say that he should not break his fast before he passes the city limits. They say that a journey has not really begun until a person passes the city limits, and a person who is still in the city is "settled" and "present". Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *"… So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadaan, i.e., is present at his home), he must observes sawm (fasts) that month…" [al-Baqarah 2:185]*. He is not counted as a traveller until he has left the city; if he is still within the city, he is regarded as one who is settled, so he is not permitted to shorten his prayers). His journey should

also not be a journey for sinful purposes (according to the majority of scholars), or for the purpose of trying to get out of having to fast.

(17) The traveller is allowed to break his fast, according to the consensus of the ummah, whether he is able to continue fasting or not, and whether is it difficult for him to fast or not. Even if his journey is easy and he has someone to serve him, he is still permitted to break his fast and shorten his prayers. (*Majmoo' al-Fataawaa*, 25/210).

(18) Whoever is determined to travel in Ramadaan should not have the intention of breaking his fast until he is actually travelling, because something may happen to prevent him from setting out on his journey. (*Tafseer al-Qurtubi*, 2/278).

The traveller should not break his fast until he has passed beyond the inhabited houses of his town; once he has passed the city limits, he may break his fast. Similarly, if he is flying, once the plane has taken off and has gone beyond the city limits, he may break his fast. If the airport is outside his city, he can break his fast there, but if the airport is within his city or attached to it, he should not break his fast in the airport because he is still inside his own city.

(19) If the sun sets and he breaks his fast on the ground, then the plane takes off and he sees the sun, he does not have to stop eating, because he has already completed his day's fasting, and there is no way to repeat an act of worship that is finished. If the plane takes off before sunset and he wants to complete that day's fasting during the journey, he should not break his fast until the sun has set from wherever he is in the air. The pilot is not permitted to bring the plane down to an altitude from which the sun cannot be seen just for the purposes of breaking the fast, because this would just be a kind of trickery, but if he brings the plane down lower for a genuine reason, and the disk of the sun disappears as a result, then he may break his fast. (From the fataawa of Shaykh Ibn Baaz, issued verbally).

(20) Whoever travels to a place and intends to stay there for more than four days must fast, according to the majority of scholars. So if a person travels to study abroad for a period of months or years, then according to the majority of scholars – including the four imaams – he is regarded as one who is "settled" there and so he has to fast and pray his prayers in full.

If a traveller passes through a city other than his own, he does not have to fast, unless his stay there is longer than four days, in which case he must fast,

because the rulings that apply to those who are settled apply also to him. (See Fataawa al-Da'wah by Ibn Baaz, 977).

(21) Whoever begins fasting while he is "settled" then embarks on a journey during the day is allowed to break his fast, because Allaah has made setting out in general a legitimate excuse not to fast. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *"… and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days on which one did not observe sawm must be made up] from other days…" [al-Baqarah 2:185]*

(22) A person who habitually travels is permitted not to fast if he has a home to which he returns, such as a courier who travels to serve the interests of the Muslims (and also taxi drivers, pilots and airline employees, even if their travel is daily – but they have to make up the fasts later). The same applies to sailors who have a home on land; but if a sailor has his wife and all he needs with him on the ship, and is constantly travelling, then he is not allowed to break his fast or shorten his prayers. If nomadic Bedouins are travelling from their winter home to their summer home, or vice versa, they are allowed to break their fast and shorten their prayers, but once they have settled in either their summer home or their winter home, they should not break their fast or shorten their prayers, even if they are following their flocks.(See *Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn Taymiyah*, 25/213).

(23) If a traveller arrives during the day, there is a well-known dispute among the scholars as to whether he should stop eating and drinking. (*Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/212). But to be on the safe side, he should stop eating and drinking, out of respect for the month, but he has to make the day up later, whether or not he stops eating and drinking after his arrival.

(24) If he starts Ramadaan in one city, then travels to another city where the people started fasting before him or after him, then he should follow the ruling governing the people to whom he has travelled, so he should only end Ramadaan when they end Ramadaan, even if it means that he is fasting for more than thirty days, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Fast when everyone is fasting, and break your fast when everyone is breaking their fast." If it means that his fast is less than twenty-nine days, he must make it up after Eid, because the hijri month cannot be less than twenty-nine days. (From *Fataawa al-Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz: Fataawa al-Siyaam*, Daar al-Watan, pp. 15-16)

[Table of Contents]

The sick

(25) In the event of any sickness that makes people feel unwell, a person is allowed not to fast. The basis for this is the aayah (interpretation of the meaning): *"… and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days on which one did not observe sawm must be made up] from other days…" [al-Baqarah 2:185]*. But if the ailment is minor, such as a cough or headache, then it is not a reason to break one's fast.

If there is medical proof, or a person knows from his usual experience, or he is certain, that fasting will make his illness worse or delay his recovery, he is permitted to break his fast; indeed, it is disliked (makrooh) for him to fast in such cases. If a person is seriously ill, he does not have to have the intention during the night to fast the following day, even if there is a possibility that he may be well in the morning, because what counts is the present moment.

(26) If fasting will cause unconsciousness, he should break his fast and make the fast up later on. (*al-Fataawa*, 25/217). If a person falls unconscious during the day and recovers before Maghrib or after, his fast is still valid, so long as he was fasting in the morning; if he is unconscious from Fajr until Maghrib, then according to the majority of scholars his fast is not valid. According to the majority of scholars, it is obligatory for a person who falls unconscious to make up his fasts later on, no matter how long he was unconscious. (*Al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer*, 1/412, 3/32; *al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaytiyyah*, 5/268). Some scholars issued fatwaas to the effect that a person who falls unconscious or takes sleeping pills or receives a general anaesthetic for a genuine reason, and becomes unconscious for three days or less, must make up the fasts later on, because he is regarded as being like one who sleeps; if he is unconscious for more than three days, he does not have to make up the fasts, because he is regarded as being like one who is insane. (From the fataawa of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, issued verbally).

(27) If a person feels extreme hunger or thirst, and fears that he may die or that some of his faculties may be irreparably damaged, and has rational grounds for believing this to be so, he may break his fast and make up for it later on, because saving one's life is obligatory. But it is not permissible to break one's fast because of bearable hardship or because one feels tired or is afraid of some imagined illness. People who work in physically demanding jobs are not permitted to break their fast, and they must have the intention at night of fasting the following day. If they cannot stop working and they are afraid that some

harm may befall them during the day, or they face some extreme hardship that causes them to break their fast, then they should eat only what is enough to help them bear the hardship, then they should refrain from eating until sunset, and they have to make the fast up later. Workers in physically demanding jobs, such as working with furnaces and smelting metals, should try to change their hours so that they work at night, or take their holidays during Ramadaan, or even take unpaid leave, but if this is not possible, then they should look for another job, where they can combine their religious and worldly duties. "*And whoever fears Allaah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he could never imagine." [al-Talaaq 65:2-3 – interpretation of the meaning]*. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/233, 235)

Students' exams are no excuse for breaking one's fast during Ramadaan, and it is not permissible to obey one's parents in breaking the fast because of having exams, because there is no obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience to the Creator. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/241).

(28) The sick person who hopes to recover should wait until he gets better, then make up for the fasts he has missed; he is not allowed just to feed the poor. The person who is suffering from a chronic illness and has no hope of recovery and elderly people who are unable to fast should feed a poor person with half a *saa'* of the staple food of his country for every day that he has missed. (Half a saa' is roughly equivalent to one and a half kilograms of rice). It is permissible for him to do this all at once, on one day at the end of the month, or to feed one poor person every day. He has to do this by giving actual food, because of the wording of the aayah – he cannot do it by giving money to the poor (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah,* 10/198). But he can give money to a trustworthy person or charitable organization to buy food and distribute it to the poor on his behalf.

If a sick person does not fast in Ramadaan, waiting to recover so that he can make the days up later, then he finds out that his sickness is chronic, he has to feed a poor person for every day that he did not fast. (From the fataawa of Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen). If a person is waiting to recover from his illness and hopes to get better, but then dies, there is no "debt" owed by him or his heirs. If a person's sickness is considered to be chronic, so he does not fast and feeds the poor instead, then advances in medical science mean that there is now a cure, which he uses and gets better, he does not have to make up the fasts he has missed, because he did what he had to do at the time. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/195)

(29) If a person is sick, then recovers, and is able to make up the missed fasts but does not do so before he dies, then money should be taken from his estate to feed a poor person for every day that he missed. If any of his relatives want to fast on his behalf, then this is OK, because it was reported in *al-Saheehayn* that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever dies owing some fasts, let his heir fast on his behalf.” (From *Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah*, volume on Da’wah, 806).

[Table of Contents]

The elderly

(30) The very elderly who have lost their strength and are getting weaker every day as death approaches, do not have to fast, and they are allowed not to fast so long as fasting would be too difficult for them. Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) used to say, concerning the aayah (interpretation of the meaning), *“And as for those who can fast with difficulty (e.g., an old man, etc.), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a poor person (for every day)” [al-Baqarah 2:184]*: “This has not been abrogated. It refers to the old man and the old woman who cannot fast, so they should feed a poor person for every day.” (Al-Bukhaari, *Kitaab al-Tafseer, Baab Ayaaman Ma’doodaat…*)

Those who have become senile and confused do not have to fast or do anything else, and their family does not have to do anything on their behalf, because such people are no longer counted as responsible. If they are of sound mind sometimes and confused at other times, they have to fast when they are OK and they do not have to fast when they are confused. (See *Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan* by Ibn ‘Uthyameen, p. 28).

(31) For those who are fighting an enemy or are being besieged by an enemy, if fasting would make them too weak to fight, they are allowed to break the fast, even if they are not travelling. If they need to break their fast before fighting, they can break their fast. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to his Companions once, before fighting: “In the morning you are going to meet your enemy and not fasting will make you stronger, so do not fast.” (Reported by Muslim, 1120, ‘Abd al-Baaqi edn. This is also the preferred opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah. The scholars of Damascus also issued fatwas to the same effect when their city was attacked by the Tatars)

(32) If a person’s reason for not fasting is obvious, such as illness, there is nothing wrong with him eating or drinking openly, but if the reason is hidden,

such as menstruation, it is better to eat and drink in secret, so as not to attract accusations and the like.

[Table of Contents]

Niyyah (intention) in fasting

(33) Niyyah (intention) is a required condition in fard (obligatory) fasts, and in other obligatory fasts such as making up missed fasts or fasts done as an act of expiation (kafaarah), because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "There is no fast for the person who did not intend to fast from the night before." (Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 2454. A number of the scholars, such as al-Bukhaari, al-Nisaa'i, al-Tirmidhi and others thought it was likely to be mawqoof. See *Talkhees al-Hubayr*, 2/188)

The intention may be made at any point during the night, even if it is just a moment before Fajr. Niyyah means the resolution in the heart to do something; speaking it aloud is bid'ah (a reprehensible innovation), and anyone who knows that tomorrow is one of the days of Ramadaan and wants to fast has made the intention. (*Majmoo' Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 25/215). If a person intends to break his fast during the day but does not do so, then according to the most correct opinion, his fast is not adversely affected by this; he is like a person who wants to speak during the prayer but does not speak. Some of the scholars think that he is not fasting as soon as he stops intending to fast, so to be on the safe side, he should make up that fast later on. Apostasy, however, invalidates the intention; there is no dispute on this matter.

The person who is fasting Ramadaan does not need to repeat the intention every night during Ramadaan; it is sufficient to have the intention at the beginning of the month. If the intention is interrupted by breaking the fast due to travel or sickness – for example – he has to renew the intention to fast when the reason for breaking the fast is no longer present.

(34) Making the intention the night before is not a condition of general nafl (supererogatory) fasts, because of the hadeeth narrated by 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), who said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) entered upon me one day and said, 'Do you have anything [food]?' We said, 'No.' He said, 'In that case I am fasting.'" (Reported by Muslim, 2/809, 'Abd al-Baaqi). But in the case of specific nafl fasts

such as ‘Arafaah and ‘Aashooraa’, it is better to be on the safe side and make the intention the night before.

(36) If a person embarks on an obligatory fast, such as making up for a day missed in Ramadaan, or fulfilling a vow, or fasting as an act of expiation (kafaarah), he must complete the fast, and he is not permitted to break it unless he has a valid excuse for doing so. In the case of a naafil fast, “the person who is observing a voluntary fast has the choice either to complete the fast or to break it” (reported by Ahmad, 6/342) – even if there is no reason to break it. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got up fasting one morning, then he ate. (As reported in Saheeh Muslim, in the story of the al-hais (a type of food) that was given to him as a gift when he was in ‘Aa’ishah’s house; no. 1154, ‘Abd al-Baaqi). But will the person who breaks his fast for no reason be rewarded for the fasting that he has already done? Some of the scholars say that he will not be rewarded (*al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 28/13), so it is better for the person who is observing a voluntary fast to complete it, unless there is a valid, pressing reason for him to stop fasting.

(36) If a person does not know that Ramadaan has started until after dawn, he has to stop eating and drinking for the rest of the day, and he has to make that day up later on, according to the majority of scholars, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “There is no fasting for the one who does not have the intention to fast from the night before.” (Reported by Abu Dawood, 2454).

(37) If a prisoner or captive knows that Ramadaan has begun by sighting the moon himself or by being told by a trustworthy person, he has to fast. If he does not know when the month is beginning, he must try to work it out for himself (ijtihaad) and act according what he thinks is most likely. If he later finds out that his fasting coincided with Ramadaan, this is fine according to the majority of scholars, and if his fasting came after Ramadaan, this is fine according to the majority of fuqahaa’, but if his fasting came before Ramadaan, this is not acceptable, and he has to make up the fast. If part of his fasting coincided with Ramadaan and part of it did not, what coincided with it or came after it is fine, but what came before is not OK. If the matter never becomes clear to him, then his fasting is fine because he did the best he could, and Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope. (*Al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 28/84).

[Table of Contents]

When to start and stop fasting

(38) Once the entire disk of the sun has disappeared, the fasting person should break his fast, and not pay any attention to the red glow that remains on the horizon, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Once night comes from there and the day disappears from there, and the sun has set, the fasting person should break his fast." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, no. 1954; the issue is also mentioned in *Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/216).

The Sunnah is to hasten in breaking the fast. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would not pray Maghrib until he had broken his fast, if only with a sip of water. (Reported by al-Haakim, 1/432; *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, 2110). If a fasting person cannot find anything with which to break his fast, he should have the intention in his heart to break his fast, and he should not suck his finger, as some of the common people do. He should beware of breaking the fast before the correct time, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw some people hanging from their hamstrings with blood pouring from the corners of their mouths, and when he asked about them, he was told that they were people who broke their fast before it was time to do so." (The hadeeth is in *Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah*, no. 1986, and in *Saheeh al-Targheeb*, 1/420). If a person is certain, or thinks it most likely, or is not sure whether he broke the fast before the proper time, he should make up the fast later on, because the basic principle is that the day is still there and has not ended. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/287). He should beware of relying on the word of small children or untrustworthy sources, and he should also beware of the time differences between different cities and villages when he hears the adhaan on the radio and so on.

(39) When the dawn comes – which is the white light coming across the horizon in the East – the fasting person must stop eating and drinking straightaway, whether he hears the adhaan or not. If he knows that the muezzin calls the adhaan at dawn, he has to stop eating and drinking as soon as he hears his adhaan, but if the muezzin calls the adhaan before Fajr, he does not have to stop eating and drinking when he hears it. If he does not know the muezzin's usual practice, or there are differences among the muezzins, and he cannot determine the time of dawn for himself – as is usually the case in cities because of lighting and buildings – he should take the precaution of referring to a printed timetable, so long as he is sure that the calculations on which it is based are not incorrect.

The idea of being on the safe side by stopping eating and drinking a certain time before Fajr, such as ten minutes before, is bid'ah. On some timetables you

can see one heading for "*imsaak*" (stopping eating and drinking) and another for Fajr; this is something that is contrary to Islam.

(40) The Muslims living in cities where there is a distinct alternation of night and day in every twenty-four hour period are obliged to fast, no matter how long the day is, so long as that distinction between night and day is there. In some places there is no such distinction between night and day; Muslims in these places should fast according to the times in the nearest city in which there is a distinct alternation of night and day.

[Table of Contents]

Things that break the fast

(41) Apart from hayd (menstruation) and nifaas (post-natal bleeding), other things that can break the fast are only considered to do so if the following three conditions apply: if a person knows that it breaks the fast and is not ignorant; if he is aware of what he is doing and has not forgotten that he is fasting; if he does it of his own free will and is not forced to do it.

Among the things that break the fast are actions that involves the expulsion of bodily fluids, such as intercourse, vomiting, menstruation and cupping, and actions that involve ingesting matter, such as eating and drinking. (*Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/148)

(42) Among the things that break the fast are things that are classified as being like eating or drinking, such as taking medicines and pills by mouth, or injections of nourishing substances, or blood transfusions.

Injections that are not given to replace food and drink but are used to administer medications such as penicillin and insulin, or tonics, or vaccinations, do not break the fast, regardless of whether they are intra-muscular or intravenous. (Fataawa Ibn Ibraaheem, 4/189). But to be on the safe side, all these injections should be given during the night.

Kidney dialysis, whereby the blood is taken out, cleaned, and put back with some chemicals or nourishing substances such as sugars and salts added, is considered to break the fast. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah,* 10/190).

According to the most correct view, suppositories, eye-drops, ear-drops, having a tooth extracted and treating wounds do not break the fast. (*Majmoo' Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 25/233, 25/245).

Puffers used for asthma do not break the fast, because this is just compressed gas that goes to the lungs – it is not food, and it is needed at all times, in Ramadaan and at other times.

Having a blood sample taken does not break the fast and is permissible because it is something that is needed. (*Fataawa al-Da'wah*: Ibn Baaz, no. 979).

Medicines used by gargling do not break the fast so long as they are not swallowed. If a person has a tooth filled and feels the taste of it in his throat, this does not break his fast. (From the fataawa of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, issued verbally).

The following things do NOT break the fast:

Having the ears syringed; nose drops and nasal sprays – so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

Tablets that are placed under the tongue to treat angina and other conditions - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

Anything inserted into the vagina, such as pessaries, douches, scopes or fingers for the purpose of a medical examination.

Insertion of a scope or intra-uterine device (IUD or "coil") and the like into the uterus.

Insertion into the urethra – for males or females – of a catheter, opaque dye for diagnostic imaging, medication or solutions for cleansing the bladder.

Dental fillings, tooth extractions, cleaning of the teeth, use of siwaak or toothbrush - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

Rinsing, gargling or applying topical mouth sprays - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

Subcutaneous, intramuscular or intravenous injections – except for those used to provide nourishment.

Oxygen.

Anaesthetic gases – so long as the patient is not given nourishing solutions.

Medications absorbed through the skin, such as creams and patches used to administer medicine and chemicals.

Insertion of a catheter into veins for diagnostic imaging or treatment of blood vessels in the heart or other organs.

Use of a laparoscope (instrument inserted through a small incision in the abdomen) to examine the abdominal cavity or to perform operations.

Taking biopsies or samples from the liver or other organs – so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions.

Gastroscopy – so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions or other substances.

Introduction of any instrument or medication to the brain or spinal column.

(43) Anyone who eats and drinks deliberately during the day in Ramadaan with no valid excuse has committed a grave major sin (kabeerah), and has to repent and make up for that fast later on. If he broke the fast with something haraam, such as drinking alcohol, this makes his sin even worse. Whatever the case, he has to repent sincerely and do more naafil deeds, fasting and other acts of worship, so as to avoid having any shortfall in his record of obligatory deeds, and so that Allaah might accept his repentance.

(44) "If he forgets, and eats and drinks, then let him complete his fast, for Allaah has fed him and given him to drink." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *Fath*, no. 1933). According to another report, "He does not have to make the fast up later or offer expiation (kafaarah)."

If a person sees someone else who is eating because he has forgotten that he is fasting, he should remind him, because of the general meaning of the aayah (interpretation of the meaning): *"... Help one another in righteousness and piety…" [al-Maa'idah 5:2]*, and the hadeeth, "if I forget, remind me"; and because of the principle that this is an evil action (*munkar*) that must be changed. (*Majlis Shahr Ramadaan*, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p.70)

(45) Those who need to break their fast in order to save someone whose life is in danger, may break their fast and should make it up later on. This applies in cases where someone is drowning, or when fires need to be put out.

(46) If a person is obliged to fast, but he deliberately has intercourse during the day in Ramadaan, of his own free will, where the two "circumcised parts" (genitals) come together and the tip of the penis penetrates either the front or back passage, his fast is broken, whether or not he ejaculates, and he has to repent. He should still fast for the rest of the day, but he has to make up the fast later on, and offer expiation (kafaarah), because of the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him): "Whilst we were sitting with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man came to him and said: 'O Messenger of Allaah, I am doomed!' He said, 'What is the matter with you?' He said, 'I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting.' The Messenger of Allaah said, 'Do you have a slave whom you could set free?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Can you fast for two consecutive months?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Do you have the wherewithal to feed sixty poor people?' He said, 'No'…" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, *al-Fath*, 4, no. 1936). The same ruling also applies in cases of zinaa (adultery or fornication), homosexuality and bestiality.

[Translator's Note: Having Intercourse from the back passage, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality are major sins in Islam and are magnified if done during the day of Ramadhan.]

If a person has intercourse during the day on more than one day during Ramadaan, he must offer expiation for each day, as well as repeating the fast for each day. Not knowing that kafaarah is obligatory is no excuse. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/321).

(47) If a man wants to have intercourse with his wife but he breaks his fast by eating first, his sin is more serious, because he has violated the sanctity of the month on two counts, by eating and by having intercourse. It is even more certain in this case that expiation is obligatory, and if he tries to get out of it, that only makes matters worse. He must repent sincerely. (See *Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/262).

(48) Kissing, hugging, embracing, touching and repeatedly looking at one's wife or concubine, if a man is able to control himself, is permissible, because it is reported in *al-Saheehayn* from 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to kiss and embrace his wives whilst he was fasting, but he was the most in control of his desire. With regard to the hadeeth qudsi, "he keeps away from his wife for My sake", this is referring to intercourse. But if a person get aroused quickly and is unable to control himself, then it is not permissible for him to kiss or embrace his wife, because that will lead to him breaking his fast, as he cannot be sure

that he will be able to avoid ejaculating or having intercourse. Allaah says in a hadeeth qudsi: “and he leaves his desire for My sake.” The Islamic guideline is that anything that leads to haraam is also haraam.

(49) If a person is engaged in the act of intercourse and dawn comes, he is obliged to withdraw, and his fast will be valid even if he ejaculates after withdrawal, but if he continues having intercourse until after dawn, he has broken his fast, and he must repent, make the fast up later, and offer expiation.

(50) If morning comes and a person is in a state of janaabah (impurity following sexual intercourse), this does not affect his fasting. He or she is permitted to delay doing ghusl, whether it is for janaabah or following menstruation or post-natal bleeding, until dawn has appeared (though well before sunrise), but it is better to hasten to do ghusl so that one can pray.

(51) If a person who is fasting sleeps and experiences a wet dream, this does not break his fast, according to scholarly consensus (*ijmaa’*), so he should complete his fast. Delaying doing ghusl does not break the fast, but he should hasten to do ghusl so that he can pray and so that the anegls will draw close to him.

(52) If a person ejaculates during the day in Ramadaan because of something that he could have refrained from, such as touching or repeatedly looking at a woman, he must repent to Allaah and fast for the rest of the day, but he also has to make up that fast later on. If a person starts to masturbate but then stops, and does not ejaculate, then he has to repent but he does not have to make the fast up later on, because he did not ejaculate. The person who is fasting must keep away from everything that may provoke his desire, and he must repel any bad thoughts that come to him. However, according to the most correct opinion, if he emits prostatic fluid (*madhiy*), this does not break his fast.

The emission of *wadiy*, a thick sticky substance that comes out after urination, with no sense of physical pleasure, does not break the fast, and a person does not have to do ghusl, but he does have to do *istinjaa’* (clean his private parts) and do wudoo’. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah*, 10/279)

(53) “Whoever vomits unintentionally does not have to make up the fast later on, but whoever vomits on purpose does have to make up the fast.” (Saheeh hadeeth narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 3/89). A person who vomits deliberately, by sticking his finger down his throat or applying pressure to his stomach, or deliberately smelling a repulsive odour, or looking at something that could make him vomit, is obliged to make up the fast later on. If he feels that he is

about to vomit, but then it subsides by itself, this does not break his fast, because it is not something that he can control, but if the vomit comes into his mouth and he swallows it back down, this does break the fast. If a person feels sick in his stomach, he does not have to suppress the urge to vomit, because this could cause him harm. (*Majaalis Sharh Ramadaan*, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 67).

If a person unintentionally swallows something that is stuck between his teeth, or if it is so small that he could not tell it was there or spit it out, this is counted as being part of his saliva and it does not break his fast. But if it is big enough to spit out, he should spit it out. If he spits it out, this is OK, but if he swallows it, this breaks his fast. If it can be diluted in the mouth, in whole or in part, and it has an added taste or sweetness, it is haraam for him to chew it. If any of this substance reaches the throat, this breaks the fast. If a person spits out water after rinsing his mouth, his fast is not affected by any moisture or wetness that is left behind, because he cannot help it.

If a person suffers from a nosebleed, his fast is still valid, because this is something that is beyond his control. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/264).

If he has gum ulcers or his gums bleed after using the siwaak (tooth stick), it is not permissible for him to swallow the blood; he has to spit it out. However, if some blood enters his throat by accident, and he did not mean for that to happen, there is no need to worry. Similarly, if vomit rises in his throat then goes back down to his stomach without him intending for this to happen, his fast is still valid. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/254).

With regard to mucus coming from the head (nose and sinuses) and phlegm coming from the chest by coughing and clearing the throat, if it is swallowed before it reaches the mouth, this does not break a person's fast, because it is a problem which all people have; but if it is swallowed after it reaches the mouth, this does break the fast. However, if it is swallowed unintentionally, it does not break the fast.

Inhaling water vapours, as may happen to people working in desalination plants, does not break the fast. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/276).

It is disliked (makrooh) to taste food unnecessarily, because this carries the risk that the fast may be broken. Examples of cases where it is necessary to taste food include a mother chewing food for an infant when she has no other way to feed him, tasting food to make sure that it is OK, and tasting something when making a purchase. It was reported that Ibn 'Abbaas said: "There is nothing wrong with tasting vinegar or anything that one wishes to buy." (Classed as hasan

in *Irwa' al-Ghaleel*, 4/86; See al-Fath, commentary on *Baab Ightisaal al-Saa'im*, *Kitaab al-Siyaam*).

(54) Using siwaak is Sunnah for the one who is fasting at all times of the day, even if it is wet. If a person who is fasting uses a siwaak and detects some heat or other taste from it and swallows it, or if he takes the siwaak out of his mouth and sees saliva on it then puts it back in his mouth and swallows the saliva, this does not break his fast. (*al-Fataawa al-Sa'diyyah*, 245). He should avoid any substance that can be diluted, such as the green siwaak, or siwaak that has any extra flavour added to it, like lemon or mint. He should spit out any small pieces that come off the siwaak in his mouth; he should not swallow them deliberately, but if he swallows them accidentally, there is no harm done.

(55) If a fasting person is injured or suffers a nosebleed, or gets water or petrol in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast. If he gets dust, smoke or flies in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast either. Things that one cannot avoid swallowing, like one's own saliva, or dust from grinding flour, do not break the fast. If a person gathers a lot of saliva in his mouth then swallows it on purpose, this does not break the fast, according to the most correct opinion. (*al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudaamah, 3/106).

If tears reach one's throat, or if a person applies oil to his hair or moustache, or uses henna, and then detects the taste of it in his throat, this does not break his fast. Using henna, kohl or oil does not break the fast. (See *Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 25/233, 25/245). This also applies to creams used to moisturize and soften the skin.

There is nothing wrong with smelling pleasant fragrances, using perfume or applying scented creams and the like. There is nothing wrong with a fasting person using bukhoor (incense), so long as he does not use it as snuff. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/314).

It is better not to use toothpaste during the day, and to leave it till night-time, because it is too strong. (*Al-Majaalis*, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p. 72).

(56) To be on the safe side, it is better for the fasting person not to be treated with cupping (*hijaamah*). There is a strong difference of opinion on this matter. Ibn Taymiyah suggested that the one who has cupping done breaks his fast, but the one who does it does not break his fast.

(57) Smoking breaks the fast, and it cannot be used as an excuse not to fast. How can a sin be taken as an excuse?!

(58) Immersing oneself in water or wrapping oneself in wet clothes in order to cool down does not break the fast. There is nothing wrong with pouring water over one's head to obtain relief from heat and thirst. Swimming is disliked, because it might make one break the fast (by swallowing water). If a person's work involves diving and he can be sure that he will not get water in his mouth, there is nothing wrong with this.

(59) If a person eats, drinks or has intercourse, thinking that it is still night, then he realizes that dawn has already broken, there is no harm done, because the aayah clearly states that it is permissible to do these things until one is sure that dawn has come. 'Abd al-Razzaaq reported with a saheeh isnaad going back to Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) that he said: "Allaah has permitted you to eat and drink so long as there is any doubt in your mind." (*Fath al-Baari*, 4/135; this is also the opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, 29/263).

(60) If a person breaks his fast, thinking that the sun has already set when it has not, he must make up the fast later on (according to the majority of scholars), because the principle is that it is still day, and a fact that is certain cannot be rejected in favour of something doubtful. (Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah thought that it was not necessary for a person in this situation to make up the fast).

If dawn breaks and a person has food or drink in his mouth, the fuqaha' are agreed that he should spit it out, and his fast is valid. This is like the ruling on one who eats or drinks because he forgets, then remembers he is fasting – if he hastens to spit out the food or drink in his mouth, his fast is still valid.

[Table of Contents]

Rulings on fasting for women

(62) A woman who has reached the age of puberty, but is too shy to tell anyone, so she does not fast, has to repent and make up the days she has missed, as well as feeding a poor person for each day, as an act of expiation for delaying her fast, if the following Ramadaan comes and she has not yet made up those days. Her case is like that of a woman who fasts the days of her period out of shyness, and does not make them up later.

If a woman does not know exactly how many days she has missed, she should fast until she is fairly certain that she has made up the days she had missed and not made up from previous Ramadaans, and offer the expiation for delaying for each day. She can do this at the same time as fasting or separately, depending on what she is able to do

(63) A woman should not fast – except during Ramadaan – if her husband is present without his permission, but if he is travelling then it does not matter.

(64) When a menstruating woman sees the white substance – which is discharged by the uterus when the period is finished – by which a woman knows that she has now become *taahir* (pure), she should have the intention to fast from the night before and should fast. If she does not have a time when she knows she is taahir, she should insert a piece of cotton or something similar, and if it comes out clean, she should fast, and if she starts to bleed again, she should stop fasting, whether the blood is a flow or just spotting, because it breaks the fast as long as it comes at the time of the period. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/154).

If the cessation of bleeding continues until Maghrib, and she has fasted with the intention from the night before, then her fast is valid. If a woman feels the movement of menstrual blood inside her, but is does not come out until after the sun has set, her fast is valid and she does not have to make the day up later.

If a woman's period or post-natal bleeding ceases during the night, and she makes the intention to fast, but dawn comes before she is able to do ghusl, according to all the scholars her fast is valid. (*al-Fath*, 4/148)

(65) If a woman knows that her period will come tomorrow, she should still continue her intention and keep fasting; she should not break her fast until she actually sees the blood.

(66) It is better for a menstruating woman to remain natural and accept what Allaah has decreed for her by not taking any medication to prevent her from bleeding. She should be content with what Allaah accepts from her of breaking her fast during her period and making those days up later. This is how the Mothers of the Believers and the women of the salaf were. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/151). Moreover, there is medical evidence to prove that many of the things used to prevent bleeding are in fact harmful, and many women have suffered from irregular periods as a result of taking them. However, if a woman does that and takes something to stop the bleeding, then fasts, this is OK.

(67) Istihaadah (non-menstrual vaginal bleeding) does not have any effect on the validity of the fast.

(68) If a pregnant woman miscarries and the foetus is formed or has a discernible outline of any part of the body, such as a head or hand, then her blood is nifaas; if, however, she passes something that looks like a blood clot (‘*alaq*) or a chewed piece of meat that has no discernible human features, her bleeding is istihaadah and she has to fast, if she is able, otherwise she can break her fast and make it up later on. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/224). Once she becomes clean after having an operation to clean the womb (D&C), she should fast. The scholars stated that the embryo is considered to start taking shape after 80 days of pregnancy.

If a woman becomes clean from nifaas before forty days, she should fast and do ghusl so that she can pray. (*al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer*, 1/360). If the bleeding resumes within forty days after the birth, she should stop fasting, because this is still nifaas. If the bleeding continues after the fortieth day, she should make the intention to fast and do ghusl (according to the majority of scholars), and any bleeding beyond the fortieth day is considered to be istihaadah (non-menstrual bleeding) – unless it coincides with the usual time of her period, in which case it is hayd (menstrual blood).

If a breastfeeding woman fasts during the day and sees a spot of blood during the night, although she was clean during the day, her fast is still valid. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/150)

(69) According to the most correct opinion, a woman who is pregnant or breastfeeding is regarded as being like one who is ill, so she is permitted not to fast, and she only has to make up the days that she missed, whether she fears for herself or for her child. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah has lifted the obligation of fasting and part of the prayer from the traveller, and He has lifted the obligation of fasting from the pregnant and breastfeeding woman.” (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3/85; he said (it is a) hasan hadeeth). If a pregnant woman fasts and experiences some bleeding, her fast is still valid; this does not affect her fast at all. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/225).

(70) In the case of a woman who is obliged to fast, if her husband has intercourse with her during the day in Ramadaan with her consent, then the ruling that applies to him also applies to her. If, however, he forces her to do that, she should do her best to resist him, and she does not have to offer expiation. Ibn ‘Aqeel (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “In the case of a

man who has intercourse with his wife during the day in Ramadaan whilst she is sleeping, she does not have to offer expiation." But to be on the safe side, she should make up that fast later on. (Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) was of the opinion that this did not invalidate her fast at all).

A woman who knows that her husband cannot control himself should keep away from him and not adorn herself during the day in Ramadaan.

Women have to make up the fasts that they miss during Ramadaan, even without their husbands' knowledge. It is not a condition for an obligatory fast for a woman to have the permission of her husband. If a woman starts to observe an obligatory fast, she is not allowed to break it except for a legitimate reason. Her husband is not permitted to order her to break her fast when she is making up a day that she has missed; he is not allowed to have intercourse with her when she is making up a missed fast, and she is not allowed to obey him in that regard. (*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 10/353).

In the case of voluntary fasts, a woman is not permitted to start a non-obligatory fast when her husband is present without his permission, because of the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him), according to which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "No woman should fast when her husband is present except with his permission." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 4793).

[Table of Contents]

In conclusion, this is what I was able to write about issues concerning fasting. I ask Allaah to help us to remember Him, thank Him and worship Him properly, and to end our Ramadaan with forgiveness, and to save us from the Fire.

May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad, and his family and companions, and grant them peace.
